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ABSTRACT

The Samuel Gompers High School (Brooklyn, New York) Bilingual Mini-School program was assessed during the 1985-86 school year, its final year of a three-year funding cycle. This evaluation is divided into the following parts: (1) description of program, including organizational personnel; (2) student characteristics; (3) findings; (4) conclusions and recommendations; and (5) appendix describing the tests used. The program provided instruction in English as a second language (ESL); native language arts; and bilingual instruction in mathematics, science, and social studies to 104 Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency. In addition, program students were enrolled in several specialized mainstream vocational courses. The program sought to help students improve their English competence and meet academic requirements for a high school diploma in as short a time as possible. Program objectives were assessed in English language development, mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish. Analysis of data showed modest success in achieving the instructional and non-instructional objectives. Students' passing rate in the ESL component improved from 62 percent in the fall to 79 percent in the spring. The overall passing rate in mathematics, science and social studies, at 67 percent, surpassed the proposed objective in this area. (PS)

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SAMUEL GOMPERS HIGH SCHOOL

BILINGUAL MINI-SCHOOL

1985-1986

OEA Evaluation Report

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O.E.A. Evaluation Section Report

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Grant Number: G003CH-4376

SAMUEL GOMPERS HIGH SCHOOL

BILINGUAL MINI-SCHOOL

1985-1986

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Gregory Bellantone

Director:
Rita M. Puente

Prepared by the
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A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This program, in its final year of a three-year funding cycle, provided instruction in English as a second language (E.S.L.), native language arts, and bilingual instruction in mathematics, science, and social studies, to 104 Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency (LEP). In addition, program students were enrolled in several specialized mainstream vocational courses.

The program proposed to meet students' academic and vocational/technical needs by helping them overcome the linguistic barriers that prevented them from successfully participating in a mainstream instructional setting. The program also sought to help students meet the academic requirements for a high school diploma in as short a time as possible.

Title VII funds provided for a project director, a resource teacher, a student advisor, and three paraprofessionals. Staff development activities included monthly staff meetings, attendance at outside workshops, and enrollment in university courses. Efforts to involve parents of participating students in school activities were made through letters and phone calls.

Program objectives were assessed in English language development, mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish (teacher-made examinations). Quantitative analysis of student achievement data indicates that:

--In E.S.L. classes, students achieved overall passing rates of 62 percent in the fall and 79 percent in the spring, but the objective could not be assessed due to lack of data on the test instrument.

--Overall, the program objective of a 65 percent passing rate was met in mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish language courses.

--Although the career awareness objective could not be assessed as proposed because no bilingual career awareness classes were offered, the overall passing rates of program students in mainstream vocational classes were high -- 82 percent in both the fall and spring.

The following recommendations are aimed at future programs serving similar populations:

--Conducting teacher-training activities on the role and effective use of the paraprofessional inside and outside the vocational classroom;

--Giving greater attention to increasing students' career awareness, developing careers/survival skills curricula, and training staff members in the use of career-related curricular materials;

--Continuing to assure that LEP students receive the attention and support they need to achieve academic success in their first two years at Samuel Gompers;

--If funds permit, hiring a full-time teacher to provide more intensive instruction in E.S.L. and extend the program to allow more LEP students who are interested in vocational education to benefit from Gomper's instructional offerings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production of this report, as of all Office of Educational Assessment/Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit reports, is the result of a cooperative effort of regular staff and consultants. In addition to those whose names appear on the cover, Eulalia Cabrera has interpreted findings and has integrated material into the reports. Arthur Lopatin has edited the report following the O.E.A. style guide and has written report summaries. Finally, Joseph Rivera, Gladys Rosa, Marcia Gilbert, and Bruce Roach have worked intensively as word processors to produce and correct reports. Without their able and faithful participation, the unit could not have have handled such a large volume of work and still produce quality evaluation reports.

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BILINGUAL MINI-SCHOOL
SAMUEL GOMPERS HIGH SCHOOL

Location:	455 Southern Boulevard Bronx, New York 10455
Year of Operation:	1985-1986, Final year of a three-year funding cycle
Target Languages:	Spanish
Number of Participants:	104 Students
Principal:	Gregory Ballatone
Project Director:	Rita M. Puente

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

OVERVIEW

The Bilingual Mini-School at Samuel Gompers High School is a bilingual (Spanish/English) program in the final year of a three-year funding cycle. Its aim is to enable students with limited English proficiency (LEP) to acquire sufficient skills in English to benefit from the school's technical course offerings by the end of the tenth grade. The instructional approach seeks to integrate academic areas, career awareness, and survival skills with the current technical-vocational curriculum.

In the 1985-86 academic year, the program provided native language instruction, bilingual instruction in content-area subjects, and instruction in English as a second language (E.S.L.). Program students were also enrolled with mainstream students in career-oriented courses taught entirely in English.

The program's main goal is to mainstream LEP students and to help them meet academic requirements for the high school diploma in as short

a time as possible. Another important aim of the program is to make students realize that the doors to technical-vocational preparation, once closed because of language barriers, will now be open to them through bilingual educational services. Thus the program prepares LEP students for both employment and college after they complete their schooling at Samuel Gompers. This is, in fact, the only Title VII program serving students in a vocational high school in New York City.

ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

The project director, student advisor, resource teacher, five content-area teachers, and three paraprofessionals make up the program staff. The project director's position is funded by Title VII and she is supervised by the assistant principal of the academic department (see Figure 1). The project director is in charge of testing and placing students in the various program classes. She also oversees academic guidance of program students, coordination of program activities and fiscal matters, staff evaluation and training, and the development of curricular activities.

The resource teacher identifies and obtains educational materials needed by the program. She also is in charge of developing curriculum materials for bilingual courses and job/career survival training materials to be added to existing courses.

The student advisor serves as grade advisor to program students, and communicates with parents regarding the progress of their children, especially those with academic and behavior problems. She is in charge of acquiring guidance resource materials, contacting community guest speakers for presentations to students, and organizing and coordinating

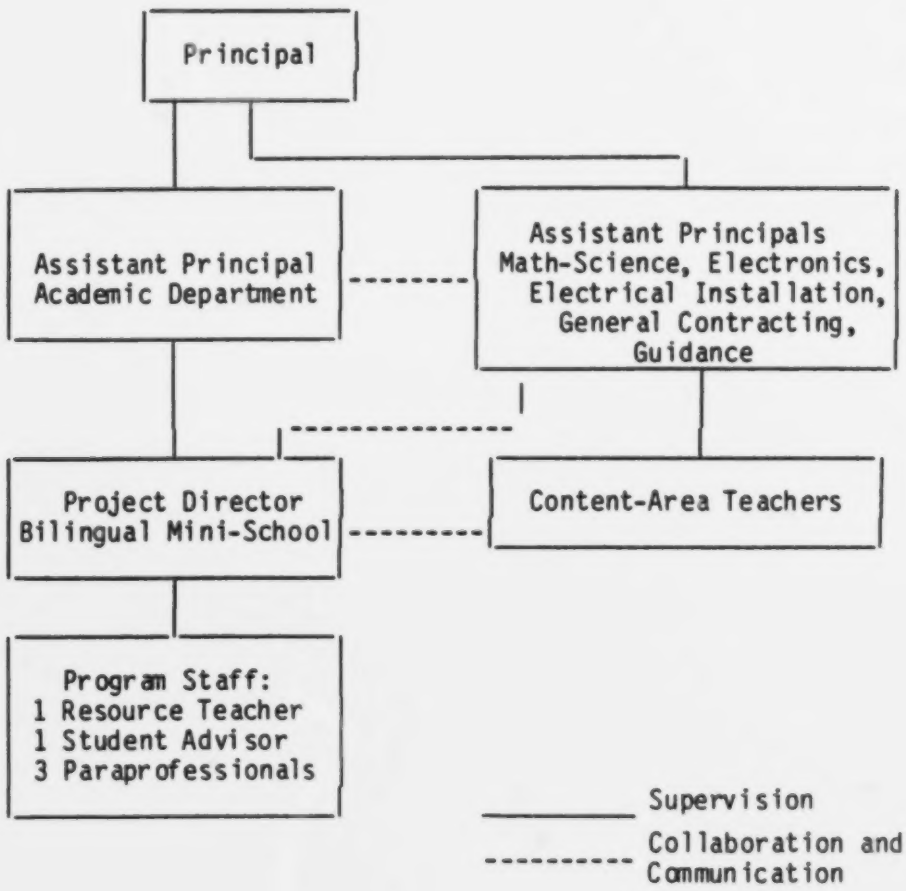
field trips. She also assists the project director with administrative tasks.

The paraprofessionals help individual students in the classroom. They also help classroom teachers with paperwork, proctoring, and correcting papers. The office aide performs the clerical and secretarial work of the program office.

The project has been without its director since January 1986. Because of an automobile accident, she was unable to return to the project in its final six months. In her absence, the student advisor and the resource teacher diligently assumed her responsibilities, in addition to their own. This event has, to some extent, negatively influenced the overall achievement of the program's goals during its third year. Another problem facing the program is the lack of fully certified, bilingual content-area teachers in the various subject areas; most of the five bilingual teachers had per diem licensee status.

FIGURE 1

Organization of the Bilingual Mini-School



II. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

In 1985-86, the majority of the program students were recent immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Four program students were Spanish speakers born in the United States (see Table 1). Although the school is coeducational, 77 percent of the students were male, indicating that electronics careers still do not attract as many females as males. Seventy-six percent of the program students were male. As seen in Table 2, 45 percent of the program students were overage for their grade placement. The highest percentage of overage students was among ninth graders (54 percent).

Forty-four percent of the students entered the program in September 1985 and three percent entered during the academic year. About 51 percent of the students had been in the program for two or more years.

By the end of the school year, 52 students (50 percent) had left the program: 25 were fully mainstreamed, 11 transferred to another school, eight left the United States, two students dropped out, one graduated, and five left for unknown reasons.

TABLE 1

Number and Percent of Program Students by Country of Birth

Country of Birth	Number	Percent
Puerto Rico	59	64
Central and South America	18	20
Dominican Republic	11	12
United States	4	4
TOTAL	92*	100

*Data were missing for 12 students.

•Sixty-four percent of the students were born in Puerto Rico.

TABLE 2

Number of Program Students by Age and Grade

Age	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Total
13	1	0	0	1
14	6	0	0	6
15	13	8	1	22
16	15	23	3	41
17	7	13	2	22
18	1	5	4	10
19	0	1	1	2
Total	43	50	11	104
Overage Students				
Number	23	19	5	47
Percent	54	38	45	45

Note. Shaded boxes indicate expected age range for grade.

- Forty-five percent of the students were overage for their grade level.
- Grade nine had the highest percentage of overage students (54 percent), whereas grade ten had the lowest (38 percent).

III. FINDINGS

The findings presented in this section are specifically related to the objectives proposed in the evaluation design included in the program proposal. They include objectives measurable by standardized test results, an examination of program materials and records, on-site observations, and interviews with relevant personnel. The findings are presented by objectives, as proposed to and accepted by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), U.S. Department of Education, and are based on available data.

OBJECTIVE 1: Between October 1985 and May 1986, students participating in E.S.L. classes will master an average of one curricular objective per month of instruction on the Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test (CREST).

Program Activities

Students were selected for the program primarily on the basis of the results of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) obtained in spring, 1984 and were placed in E.S.L. classes according to their level of proficiency as determined by their scores on the LAB and the CREST (see Appendix A). During the fall and spring semesters, E.S.L. courses were offered at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. The project director (until January), the student advisor, and the resource teacher each taught one period.

A member of the evaluation team observed three E.S.L classes. At one, the first half of the lesson, at which 16 students were present, was devoted to whole-class instruction in identifying the elements of a short story.

The teacher then asked students several questions about the elements of a short story and had them read selections from their textbooks. The correct answers were also written on the board.

The second E.S.L. lesson dealt with dictionary skills and idioms. The teacher used a lecture-and-repetition approach in an enthusiatic manner to accomplish the lesson's objectives. The material used in the class contained many exercises in vocabulary and reading-skills development.

The third E.S.L. lesson involved students in a variety of reading-comprehension activities. A significant effort was made by the teacher to incorporate culturally-relevant background materials, e.g., an article on Luis Munoz Marin, one of Puerto Rico's most famous statesmen and poets. Students were attentive and responsive throughout this animated lesson.

Student Achievement in E.S.L.

The objective could not be assessed using results of the CREST as proposed. No data were provided for the spring semester, and data were provided for only 36 students in the fall. The fall data were suspect because some students at Level 1 of the test were reported to have mastered five objectives on pretest but none on posttest. Passing rates in E.S.L. courses, reported for 76 students in the fall and 53 students in the spring, indicated that program students achieved a passing rate of 62 percent in the fall and 79 percent in the spring.

OBJECTIVE 2: Sixty-five percent of program students enrolled in content-area classes (mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish) will pass them.

Program Activities

Program students were enrolled in bilingual mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish-language courses that met five periods a week. Math offerings included fundamental math for ninth and tenth graders; science courses included general science and biology; and social studies courses included world geography and global history. Two Spanish language classes met each semester. These courses were parallel to mainstream offerings and bilingual students took the same regents' examinations. Paraprofessional assistance was available in all content-area classes.

In a mathematics class observed by a member of the evaluation team, the teacher and 17 students were reviewing math and some reading items from previous Regents Competency Tests. Although the tests were in English, the teacher used Spanish for directions, explanations, and summaries; the test items were in English. During the review, the teacher and the paraprofessional assisted individual students.

In a history class, the teacher lectured on issues and problems of America's Constitutional Convention. Through appropriate handouts, a balanced use of Spanish and English, and paraprofessional assistance, the aims of the lesson were achieved. The resource teacher also tutored students in content-area subjects.

Student Achievement in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Spanish

Table 3 presents the passing rates for program students in mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish courses. No data were available for Spanish courses in the spring. A weighted average for the year was also computed.

Examination of Table 3 reveals that students achieved an overall passing rate of 67 percent, thus meeting the program objective. In the fall, the program objective was met only for Spanish courses with a 67 percent passing rate. In the spring semester, however, students surpassed the program objective in each subject area for an overall passing rate of 88 percent. The lowest passing rate was in science in the fall (43 percent); the highest passing rate was in science in the spring (96 percent). By the end of the year, program students had considerably higher performance in math, science, and social studies courses than they did in the fall semester.

TABLE 3

Passing Rates in Content-Area Courses

Course	Fall		Spring		Overall Passing Rate
	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Number of Students	Percent Passing	
Mathematics	56	55.4	46	80.4	66.7
Science	60	43.3	44	95.5	65.4
Social Studies	65	58.5	41	87.8	69.8
Spanish	30	66.7	--	--	66.7
Total		54.5		87.8	67.2

- Overall, the program objective of achieving a 65 percent passing rate in content-area and Spanish courses was achieved.
- In the fall, the program objective was achieved only in Spanish language courses.
- The objective was surpassed in math, science, and social studies in the spring semester.

OBJECTIVE 3: Eighty percent of the students participating in career awareness activities will improve their knowledge of career and survival/life skills as demonstrated by either:

1. passing teacher-made tests in instructional units relative to the above areas; or

2. achieving a satisfactory rating in the mastery of job-related activities (interview skills, telephoning, writing a resume).

Program Activities

According to the student advisor, formal bilingual career-awareness classes were not offered. To a limited extent, information about careers available to bilinguals and the necessary job-related skills was given in E.S.L. classes and in the program office. Skills taught included how to make phone inquiries about job advertisements; how to write letters applying for a job; how to write a resume; and how to behave on a job interview.

Program students were enrolled with mainstream students in career-oriented courses such as general contracting, electronics, electrical installation, word processing, and data processing. These courses were taught entirely in English. New York City curricula were used in these specialized courses, and paraprofessionals were present to assist LEP students.

According to the student advisor, a special shop class for ninth-grade LEP students was successfully implemented. During this class, career awareness and survival/life skills were provided. In addition, all students in the target population received instruction in computer labs.

Counseling services were especially important to students, not only in the vocational area but in other areas as well. The bilingual office has an open-door policy: the student advisor is available at all times to prevent students' problems from overwhelming them. The staff felt that immediate assistance could help in lessening student attrition. She was instrumental in solving classroom problems and served as a crisis-intervention agent; she also aided students in improving their relationship with the non-bilingual faculty.

Student Achievement in Career and Survival Skills

Since bilingual career awareness classes were not offered, the objective could not be assessed as proposed. For descriptive purposes, passing rates in mainstream vocational courses were examined. Courses included career orientation, computer literacy, office machines, accounting, and other vocational electives. In the fall, 82 percent of the 51 program students enrolled in vocational courses obtained a passing grade. Similar results were obtained by 82 percent of the 50 students enrolled in the same courses in the spring semester.

OBJECTIVE 4: At least one curriculum unit will be developed or identified in each of the following areas: exploring careers, school survival skills, job survival skills, and community survival/life skills.

Program Activities

According to the student advisor and the resource teacher, after evaluating the needs of program students, curricula were developed for native language arts classes and for all three levels of E.S.L. instruction. Two documents, "Job Opportunities in the Field of Foreign Languages" and "The Bilingual Mini-School," were also reviewed by the evaluation team, thus partially meeting the program objective. The project director stated that a unit on career survival skills was in the planning stage, indicating that the program is on its way to completely fulfilling this objective.

OBJECTIVE 5: All teachers serving participating students will receive training in the use of the curricular materials developed or identified above.

Program Activities

During the project's third year, staff development activities were limited to bimonthly meetings of program staff and teachers to review program objectives and share information.

The project director and the student advisor attended workshops sponsored by OBEMLA on student testing, regents diploma requirements, and computers as instructional tools. Since training sessions were not scheduled for teachers during this year, the program objective was not achieved.

OBJECTIVE 6: By June 1984, at least two teachers will take six credits at colleges or universities in areas related to E.S.L., bilingual education, and career education.

Program Activities

As information in this area was not provided, the objective could not be assessed.

OBJECTIVE 7: Parents of participating students will be informed as to program activities, relevant aspects of school rules and activities, and student progress by means of the following: an orientation session; at least two informative flyers; telephone contacts for academic warnings and disciplinary problems, as the need arises.

Program Activities

Letters describing the program, testing schedules, and disciplinary action were sent to parents of program students in an attempt to involve them in school activities. In addition, many parents were contacted by telephone during the academic year on an as-needed basis. Thus the program objective was partly met in this area.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

In its third year of Title VII funding, the Bilingual Mini-School showed modest success in achieving its instructional and non-instructional objectives.

The E.S.L. component, structured in three levels of proficiency, attempted to integrate reading with the E.S.L. curriculum. Students' passing rates in these courses improved from 62 percent in the fall to 79 percent in the spring. However, the proposed program objective in this area could not be assessed due to contradictory or missing CREST data.

Content-area subjects were taught in both English and Spanish, and paraprofessionals were available in each class to assist teachers. As in E.S.L., students demonstrated an improvement in mathematics, science, and social studies from fall to spring. The overall passing rate of 67 percent surpassed the proposed objective in this area. However, most of the instruction that was observed consisted of lectures to the whole class, and the paraprofessionals appeared to be underused during class time. A tutorial system, whereby paraprofessionals provide individual help to students, would make better use of the paraprofessionals' time.

Except for a shop class, there was little documentation of the program's activities to increase students' awareness of careers and to develop life skills, or of the development of a curriculum unit for this purpose. It is highly recommended that greater attention be given to

this area in the near future. Although the proposed objective in this area could not be assessed, students' passing rates in mainstream vocational courses were examined. Results of teacher-made tests revealed high overall passing rates of 82 percent each semester.

Staff development was almost non-existent. Although some effort has been made to contact the Multifunctional Support Service Center at Teachers College, workshops or training sessions have not been scheduled to date. This may be partly due to the absence of the project director, who was seriously injured in a car accident in January 1986. This component needs to be implemented in the future with greater attention given to the original objectives of career awareness and E.S.L.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for future programs serving similar populations.

- Teacher-training activities that focus on the role and effective use of paraprofessionals inside and outside the classroom might be conducted.
- The program should give greater attention to achieving its goals of increasing students' career awareness, developing a career/survival-skills curriculum, and training staff members in the use of career-related curricular materials.
- The school administration should assure that LEP students continue to receive the attention and support they desperately need to achieve academic success in their first two years at Samuel Gompers High School.

- If funds permit, the school should hire a full-time teacher to provide more intensive instruction in E.S.L. and extend the program so that more LEP students who are interested in vocational education to benefit from Gomper's instructional offerings.

V. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of non-native speakers of English in order to determine if their level of English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to participate effectively in classes taught in English. The areas measured are listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The LAB was designed to maximize the discrimination of the test for the non-native at the 20th percentile on the norms for an English proficient sample. This is the cutoff point for eligibility for bilingual and E.S.L. instruction. The Kuder-Richardson Reliability Estimate for the total test was .97 for the high school level (Level 4). Studies have shown that the relative difficulty of items was highly similar for both native and non-native speakers, thus validating the homogeneity of the test's content.

The Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test (CREST) was developed by the Board of Education of the City New York to measure mastery of instructional objectives of the E.S.L. curricula, and thus was constructed to maximize content validity. The test contains four items per curricular objective, and mastery of an objective is achieved when three of these items are answered correctly. The test measures mastery of 25 objectives at Levels 1 and 2, and 15 objectives at Level 3. The Kuder-Richardson Reliability Estimates for pretest and posttest administrations of the three levels of the CREST are:

Level 1 -- pretest (.91)/posttest (.96)

Level 2 -- pretest (.94)/posttest (.95)

Level 3 -- pretest (.91)/posttest (.91)